Southern Rockies Landscape Conservation Cooperative
Steering Committee Meeting
Bureau of Reclamation Offices – 555 Broadway Blvd. NE, Suite 100
Albuquerque, NM 87102
February 28, 2012

Final Meeting Summary

Participants

Please see Appendix A for a complete list of meeting participants

Meeting Objectives

Build agreement on a recommended focus for 2012 funding (including projects and implementation strategies)

Agreements

- The Steering Committee (SC) agreed the LCC will focus in 2012 on the six science needs recommended by the Science Working Group (please see section below).
- After lengthy discussions, the SC provided narrowed direction on potential projects for each of the six science needs and a process to get a set of 2012 projects; small groups will refine further and the Science Working Group (SWG) will recommend a set of projects for SC approval (please see section below).
- The SRLCC representative for the North Central and Southwest Climate Science Centers' Stakeholder Advisory Committees will be the LCC Coordinator (Kevin Johnson) and the Science Coordinator (John Rice) will participate on the Climate Science Centers' Proposal Review Panels.

Action Items

- Small teams, one for each science need, will establish a recommended set of projects for 2012 to address the science needs (by end of March/early April).
- SWG will review the project recommendations from small teams and develop a recommendation for the SC (by early April).
- SC will review and approve the SWG recommended set of projects for 2012 (by mid-April).
- Kevin Johnson will circulate the template to the small groups and follow up to make sure they are being completed.
- Contact Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Kyle McFee for assistance with tribal outreach and determining science needs/projects.
- Kevin Johnson and John Rice will work to define draft measureable objectives and measureable outcomes for review and revision by the SC.

Detailed Meeting Overview:

Status of the Southern Rockies LCC

Kevin Johnson presented the group with an overview of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and the status of the Southern Rockies Landscape Conservation Cooperative (SRLCC), including a reminder of the SRLCC projects funded in 2011

Data Portal
Kevin Johnson gave an update on progress on the data portal. A scope of work has been developed with the USGS Core Science Informatics program, Fort Collins, CO and the Interagency Agreement is working its way through Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) channels

- *Is there an effort for a national level LCC data portal?* Yes, to a degree. The LCCs neighboring the SRLCC have either implemented, or are in the process of implementing, the same platform (ScienceBase) thus nearly all western LCCs will have consistent data access or use. We plan to have the SRLCC data portal available by June of 2012.
- *How are the boundaries of the SRLCC defined?* The boundaries are defined by a combination of bird conservation regions and geography.

Website
FWS is contracting to design and develop the SRLCC website. The contract is working its way through the FWS contract office. There is a need for the FWS to satisfy internal concerns pertaining to the website's establishment as a non-governmental website. Kevin Johnson is working this issue through the FWS Information Resources and Technology Management team. The contract is expected to be finalized March/April.

Outreach to Tribes
Kevin has been working with Kyle McFee, Shiviwitz Band of Paiute, who is the Tribal Advisor to the SC. Kevin has scheduled visits with the Hopi and Navajo tribes later this month to discuss SRLCC and collaboration on natural and cultural resource needs.

SRLCC Science Coordinator
Larry Walkoviak, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Upper Colorado Regional Director introduced the Science Coordinator, John Rice who is based out of Salt Lake City. John looks forward to getting to know the group better and to take on the project.

Budget 2012
Kevin Johnson presented the 2012 SRLCC budget; showing available capacity and science funds from FWS, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and United States Geological Survey (USGS). Current available combined capacity is $996,500 and available applied science funds total $891,000.

- *Do USGS funds require the same level of matching funds as the BOR funds?* No.
- *What are the requirements for the BOR funds?* For WaterSmart grant funds BOR requires a 50% non-federal match in funding and grants are for state, tribal, local and non-governmental organizations (Federal entities are not allowed to apply). Federal entities are able to enter into Interagency Agreements with BOR if the project fits with the priority of the WaterSmart program.
- *Is there potential for the LCCs, as a whole, to seek out projects and funding on a national level?* The FWS national office has held back funds this year to be used for inter LCC collaboration projects. Additionally, there is a current opportunity to utilize these funds for a proposed Sage Grouse project that would include 4 LCCs (Great Northern, Great Basin, Southern Rockies, and Plains and Prairie Potholes).

Review Science Working Group (SWG) Process and Recommendations

The SWG conducted a Science Needs Assessment in order to recommend priority science needs for 2012 to the SC. They started with the SC key resources identified in September 2011 and the SC identified list of 68 of science needs, then took the following steps to arrive at a recommended set of science needs and potential projects for 2012:

- Ranked all 68 science needs according to SWG identified criteria.
- Grouped science needs according to common themes (vulnerability, hydrology, invasives, land disturbance, landscape characterization/GIS, and connectivity).
- Identified vulnerability, hydrology, land disturbance, and landscape characterization/GIS as priority themes.
- Identified priority science needs for each of the priority themes.
- At a workshop, built agreement on a recommended set of 6 science needs covering hydrology (supply and demand) , vulnerability (riparian obligates, habitat reduction, and connectivity) and long-term (spatial data) (*these were approved by the SC, see agreement below for the full list).*

Discussion Broadly:

- The group discussed the role of the Climate Science Centers in relation to the LCCs. It was suggested the SRLCC look toward the Great Northern LCC to learn from their stakeholder engagement process which will help more clearly determine the relationship between the SRLCC and the two Climate Science Centers in the region.
- There are obstacles to determining the science needs of tribes. **ACTION:** Kyle McFee offered to send a link to the SC for a webinar that is helpful for identifying tribal science needs.
- Moving forward in the future, it was recognized a better process would be to identify the priority management question and goals first then identify the science needs.
- The SRLCC acknowledged the need to have better communication between the members of the SC and those from the SWG.

Discussion of Recommended Science Needs:

- Clarification of terminology: "endangered species" - where listed as a key resource, means a focus on "preventing new listings" more than a focus on delisting species.
- Hydrology 2012 science needs discussion (2 science needs):
    - One of the hydrology science needs was about supply: "Identify changes in source-water runoff and resultant changes to surface/groundwater flows."
    - The other hydrology science need was about demand: "Incorporate climate change projections and ecological flow needs into existing, or new hydrological models, offering water mangers information about water supply scenarios to support decisions about water allocation to meet human and ecological needs."
    - CO River Basin states are interested in contributing to projects dealing with consumptive use losses. They would like to see their funding stretched and see an opportunity for synergy with the SRLCC.
    - The Nature Conservancy also expressed interest in ongoing collaborations specifically related to incorporating climate change projections and ecological flow needs into existing, or new hydrological models, offering water managers information about water supply scenarios to support decisions about water allocation to meet human and ecological needs.
    - It is important to note that funding from BOR will be from the WaterSmart program and will be available to fund hydrology based projects or vulnerability projects that have a nexus with hydrology. The SRLCC felt it was best to prioritize the projects before the consideration of funding.
- Vulnerability 2012 science needs (3 science needs):
    - There was discussion and agreement to broaden the riparian obligate bird science need to include all species and wetlands; to change the term "riparian obligate birds" in the need to "riparian obligate and wetland species."
    - Grassland was raised as an important resource to cover; suggesting adding it to the Key Resources column. The five key resources were recognized to be limited in their scope of the "landscape" across the SRLCC geographic area. They were identified by the SC at

their September 2011 meeting as a focus for 2012, and should not be construed as set long-term priorities for the SRLCC.

- Long Term 2012 science need (1 science need):
    - The SC discussed the current compilation of data that already exists and how it can be incorporated into the proposed data portal. Bureau of Land Management has data being compiled for their Rapid Ecoregional Assessments and other sources have already begun data collection. A member suggested having a data steward, someone with the intellectual capacity (or at least a group of people) to answer: "what data is needed, where does it already exist, and what are the data gaps?"

Agreement: The SC agreed on the following six science needs:

a. Identify changes in source-water runoff and resultant changes to surface/groundwater flows;
b. Incorporate climate change projections and ecological flow needs into existing or new hydrological models, offering water mangers information about water supply scenarios to support decisions about water allocation to meet human and ecological needs;
c. Develop a model to inform management decisions related to habitat protection/preservation for desired population numbers of riparian obligate and wetland species;
d. Assessment of vulnerability to reduction in habitat;
e. Assess species/population vulnerabilities through identification of migration/connectivity corridors, ultimately identifying adaptation strategies; and
f. Spatial Data (including GIS layers) to acquire vegetation land cover, land use, water utilization, energy development, population centers – current and potential future, recreation use, etc. to aid in identification of LCC focal resources and associated needs.

Build Agreement on 2012 Focus Projects and Science Needs

The SRLCC was tasked with building agreement on a 2012 set of projects. The group struggled with how and/or whether to narrow the projects under science needs. The discussion of how or whether to narrow centered on two interests: one, the desire to have the right people identify and narrow the projects; and two, the pressure of the timeline available for progress (the time may be too short to convene another process to recommend projects). The timeline is driven by the ability to select and fund projects within 2012 and avoid the hurried nature of last year's funding process. The 2011 funding opportunity process was completed in June and felt rushed.

The result of the above conversation was the facilitator suggesting and implementing a dot exercise. The group then developed a process to identify and review existing projects and refine potential new projects.

It was recognized that although the dot exercise reulsts was a good direction, in the dot exercise resultsit wasn't based on finding leveraging opportunities which was more important. It was then agreed that small groups would be formed, per priority science need, to look for leveraging opportunities (what is currently being done about this need). The small groups were given latitude to recommend projects based both on the narrowed direction as well as the leveraging opportunities.

Narrowed direction of projects under the six 2012 priority science needs:

- **Science need a**: Identify changes in source-water runoff and resultant changes to surface/groundwater flows.
    - **Project:** Impacts of climate change on hydrology: Determine how climate change may affect snowmelt runoff, snow-covered area, soil moisture levels in summer months and seasonal hydrologic flux; and
    - **Project**: Impacts of land use change on runoff/groundwater: e.g., burned areas, conversion of timber to grassland, etc.

- **Science need b**: Incorporate climate change projections and ecological flow needs into existing, or new hydrological models, offering water mangers information about water supply scenarios to support decisions about water allocation to meet human and ecological needs.
    - **Project**: Incorporate ecological flow needs into an existing or new basin-wide model for the Colorado River system to integrate human and ecological water needs. Bureau of Reclamation's Colorado River Simulation System (CRSS) may be an option; and
    - **Project**: Understand ecological response to changing flow patterns: In the Colorado Basin, perform consistent and widespread examination of the ecological response to more or less alteration of daily and other ecological flow patterns.
- **Science need c**: Develop a model to inform management decisions related to habitat protection/preservation for desired population numbers of riparian obligate and wetland species.
    - **Project**: Create a seamless digital riparian habitat inventory and conditions map across the LCC; and
    - **Project**: Conduct habitat vulnerability assessments identifying habitats that are likely to expand and ones that may become locally extinct due to projected changes in flow patterns, groundwater depletion, human development, etc.
        - Determine effects of groundwater depletions on surface water and riparian habitat prioritized by immediate threats
        - Model to predict the effects of altered stream flows on priority riparian obligate birds and their associated habitats.
- **Science need d**: Assessment of vulnerability to reduction in habitat;
    - Sage Grouse;
    - Vulnerable habitat; and
    - Eagles
- **Science need e**: Assess species/population vulnerabilities through identification of migration/connectivity corridors; ultimately identifying adaptation strategies.
    - **Project**: Identify linkages between critical habitats and migration corridors that will facilitate wildlife movement in the face of natural and human-related changes to the landscape; and
    - **Project**: Connectivity planning: The goal of this project is to develop a landscape model to identify a network of intact and connected landscapes to support wildlife populations and natural processes.
- **Science Need f**: Spatial Data (including GIS layers) to acquire vegetation land cover, land use, water utilization, energy development, population centers – current and potential future, recreation use, etc. to aid in identification of LCC focal resources and associated needs.
    - **Project**: Warren Day offered to gather a group to determine how to move this project forward. The group will report back to the SC.

When the SC completed the narrowed direction exercise they reviewed the set of projects and built agreement on how to establish a more thorough recommended set of 2012 projects for the SC to approve.

Agreement: Process to further develop a set of 2012 projects

- Create small work groups for each science need; gathering people who understand the science need and have the ability to make collaborative recommendations. The purpose of the groups will be look for leveraging opportunities and recommend a doable set of projects for each science need. By the end of March the small work groups will:
    - Identify from SRLCC partners existing, and/or need efforts to address each science need using a template;
    - Identify opportunities to leverage existing work; and
    - Recommend a set of projects and how they might be implemented (collaboration, funding opportunities, etc.).
- Identify champions for each small group or theme; the champions will facilitate the development of small groups and the work of those groups *(see Action below for the champions)*.

- Create a template that will identify opportunities for leveraging funds (Kevin Johnson will provide this to small group champions)
- Reach out to tribes (Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribes) to help determine science needs and projects – Kyle McFee, Shiviwits Band of Paiute, and Mary Manuelito, BIA, volunteered to help Kevin.
- SWG will, by early April, review small work group recommended projects and build agreement on a set of projects for 2012 for approval by the SC.
- SC will, by the middle of April, approve a set of projects for 2012 via conference call.

Volunteer Champions and Small Team Volunteers:

- Avra Morgan (BOR) and John Rice (SRLCC) agreed to champion the science needs a and b; volunteers include: Larry Walkoviak (BOR), Mike Johnson (New Mexico-Office of State Engineer), Mike Sullivan (Colorado), Pam Benjamin (National Park Service), Frank McCormick (Forest Service)
- Dave Anderson, Colorado Natural Heritage and Becky Mitchell, Colorado Department of Natural Resources agreed to champion science needs c-e; volunteers include: Mary Manuelito (BIA), Mitchell Hannon (Trust for Public Lands), David Mehlman (The Nature Conservancy). Rayo McCollough (Natural Heritage New Mexico) and Bureau of Land Management will recommend representatives to assist in the small group.
- Warren Day agreed to champion science need f.

Action Items:

- Small group champions will convene the small work groups and begin the identifying partners from whom to request specific information, bases on the template.
- Kevin Johnson will draft and circulate a template for gathering information from partners on what is being done under each science need.
- Kevin Johnson, Kyle McFee and Mary Manuelito will reach out to BIA and tribes for science needs.
- A SWG call will be scheduled for early April to provide a recommended set of projects.
- A SC call will be scheduled for the middle of April to review and approve a set of projects.

Expectations and Measures of Performance for SRLCC

The SRLCC staff will work to develop draft expectations and measures of performance over the next 7-10 months. The outcome measures will be important when requesting future funding especially from congress.

Action Item: Kevin Johnson and John Rice will work with the SC to define the measureable objectives and measureable outcomes which will then be vetted through the SC.

Administrative Items

SRLCC Representatives for the North Central and Southwest Climate Science Centers (NCCSC and SWCSC)

Both Jeff Morrisett from NCCSC and Dave Busch from SWCSC spoke briefly about their CSC and the need for an SRLCC representative. The SRLCC also requested their membership on the Steering Committee.

Agreement: SC representation on the Climate Science Centers committees will be John Rice for any science panel work and Kevin Johnson for the Stakeholder Advisory Committee level.

Facilitation

The Keystone Center recused themselves and the SC discussed the desire and need for continued use of third-party facilitation. The contract with the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (ECR) has ended as of the end of this meeting. ECR's efforts as neutral convener were greatly appreciated. The SC agreed to continue with a third-party facilitator and to put out a contract for bids.

Agreement: Continue to use and contract with a third-party facilitator.

Next Meetings:

- Mid April: Conference call to review and approve a set of projects for 2012
- Late summer/early fall: In person, location TBD

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Appendix A

Dave Anderson	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
Pam Benjamin	National Park Service
John Bradford	United States Geological Survey
Paul Barrett	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Warren Day	United States Geological Survey
Leigh Espy	Bureau of Land Management
Rodger Ferreira	United States Geological Survey
Doug Fruge	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Suzanne Gifford	Pueblo of Jemez
Kathy Granillo	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Steve Guertin	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Helen Hankins	Bureau of Land Management
Mitchel Hannon	Trust for Public Lands
Kevin Johnson	SRLCC Coordinator
Mike Johnson	New Mexico – Office of State Engineer
Mary Manuelito	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Frank McCormick	United States Forest Service
Rayo McCollough	Natural Heritage New Mexico
Kyle McFee	Shivwits Band of Paiutes
David Mehlman	The Nature Conservancy
Avra Morgan	Bureau of Reclamation
Ariane Pinson	United States Army Corps of Engineers
Sharon Pinto	Bureau of Indian Affairs
John Rice	SRLCC Science Coordinator
Lawrence Snow	Shivwits Band Tribal Council
Stephan Torbit	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Rick Truex	United States Forest Service
Josh Vest	Intermountain West Joint Venture
Larry Walkoviak	Bureau of Reclamation
Jody Erikson	The Keystone Center
Niki Koszalka	The Keystone Center